

Examples of Helpful/ Hurtful- General

In this section you will find examples of Helpful/Hurtful self-talk that can be utilized for discussion with youth.

Maggie: I am 17 years old and have been struggling with bipolar disorder since sixth grade. I went through some really tough years that included some school suspensions, some poor choices around alcohol, and there were times when I didn't want to keep going. Despite all of that, things are working out pretty well. I see my therapist once every two weeks, I have a job after school, and get pretty good grades. I cannot wait to be on my own after high school, but I still get along OK with my parents. I know that people think I have beaten my mental illness and recovered. Yes, I am living in recovery, but I do not think many people realize how much work I put into my mental health to live a balanced life. I am part of a great group that meets at our youth center on Sunday afternoons. The other teens seem to like me and offer me lots of support. We don't hang out together at school. I don't think I will ever have good friends to hang out with. I shared my story for a speech class assignment and was asked if I wanted to share it again at the school's mental health month event. I feel pretty proud of how far I have come, but I am not sure if I am ready for the bullying that might come from sharing my story at the health month event.

Darryl: I struggled with bipolar disorder since I was 14. I am 18 now. I was so stupid and messed up. My family and friends hated having me around. I wasn't so sure I wanted to be around either. I worked hard in therapy and sometimes went three times a week. They finally got me on track when they gave me the right medication. The coach let me play football my senior year, and I just found out that they accepted me into college. My therapist only wants to see me every other week now. No one at school knows about my illness. I want it that way. No one understands what this is like, so I deal with it alone.

Examples of Helpful/Hurtful- Tourette Syndrome

In this section you will find examples of Helpful/Hurtful self-talk that can be used along with the general examples to incorporate the experiences of youth with Tourette Syndrome.

Maggie: I am 17 years old and have been struggling with Tourette since fourth grade. I went through some really tough years where no one knew what was going on with me. I blinked my eyes and sniffed a lot. Doctors gave me glasses and allergy pills to help me but, I kept on blinking and sniffing. I'd get yelled at in school for making noises in class or tapping my pencil on my desk. I started getting bullied at school because of all this. Since I have been diagnosed, things are working out pretty well. I even helped talk to everyone at my middle school about Tourette with the help of a Youth Ambassador from the Tourette Association. My symptoms can be better or worse at different times. Sometimes this frustrates me. I see my therapist once every two weeks, to help me work through my frustration. I cannot wait to be out of high school and go on to college or a job. Yes, I am living successfully with Tourette, but I do not think many people realize how much work I put into managing my tics. I am part of a great group that meets at our youth center on Sunday afternoons. The other teens seem to like me and offer me lots of support. We don't hang out together at school. I don't think I will ever have good friends to hang out with. I shared my story for a speech class assignment and was asked if I wanted to share it again at the school's mental health month event. I feel pretty proud of how far I have come, but I am not sure if I am ready for the bullying that might come from sharing my story at the health month event.

Darryl: I'm 15. Last year, a doctor told me I have Tourette. I knew something was wrong with me. I make this grunting noise and I stamp my foot. When I was younger I did other weird things. My family and friends have a hard time with my tics. They are always trying to get me to stop them. I hate places where I have to be quiet and sit still, like church. I take medication now and it helps some. It seems to me that I should be able to stop the rest.

Most kids at school don't bother me, except once when a kid was picking on me and I punched him. He got what he deserved. They gave me a week of detentions for that.

I have to do things in 3's and if I miss a step, I have to start over. So, I am late a lot and I make my dad mad. My grades are ok and teachers pretty much leave me alone. I like track and they needed a bigger team so, coach let me on the team. No one at school knows I have Tourette. I just take my meds and don't talk about it much. No one understands what this is like, so I deal with it alone.

Examples of Helpful/Hurtful- College

In this section, you will find examples of Helpful/Hurtful self-talk that can be utilized with a college-age audience.

Marie is 21 years old and has had about five years of struggling with bipolar disorder. Despite this disability, things are working out well: she hasn't had a hospitalization in two years, she's working a good on-campus job, she's earning good grades in all of her classes, and she's living with a supportive roommate. By many people's standards, she has beat her mental illness and recovered. Still, Marie frequently attends mutual help groups where she provides support to peers who are struggling with more acute problems related to their illness. She is also an outspoken advocate against stigma. She speaks out at campus events where she publicly discloses as a person with mental illness who is outraged by the disrespectful images of mental illness that are rampant in our society as well as on campus. **Marie is a person who identifies herself as “mentally ill.”**

John Henry has a very similar history to Marie. He has struggled with bipolar disorder since he was 16. Now, he is 21, involved in a debate team on campus, and working a great internship to complement his business major. He has not been hospitalized in two years and almost no one at his internship or in his social circle on campus knows about his illness. John Henry wants it that way. Not only does he choose not to let others know about his past, he does not view himself as a person with mental illness. *“I'm a complex being with only a very small piece of me having to do with mental illness.”* **John Henry is a person who does not identify himself as “mentally ill.”**

Examples of Helpful/Hurtful- Adult

In this section, you will find examples of Helpful/Hurtful self-talk that can be utilized with an adult population.

Marie is 32 years old and has had more than a dozen years of struggling with schizophrenia. Despite this disability, things are working out well: she hasn't had a hospitalization in five years, she's working a good job, she's keeping a nice home, and she's living with a supportive husband. By many people's standards, she has beat her mental illness and recovered. Still, Marie frequently attends mutual help groups where she provides support to peers who are struggling with more acute problems related to their illness. She is also an outspoken advocate against stigma. She testifies at government hearings where she publicly discloses as a person with mental illness who is outraged by the disrespectful images of mental illness that are rampant in our society. **Marie is a person who identifies herself as "mentally ill."**

John Henry has a very similar history to Marie. He has struggled with schizophrenia since he was 19. Now, he is 32, married, and working a great job in a law office. He has not been hospitalized in five years and almost no one at work or in his social circle knows about his illness. John Henry wants it that way. Not only does he choose not to let others know about his past, he does not view himself as a person with mental illness. *"I'm a complex being with only a very small piece of me having to do with mental illness."* **John Henry is a person who does not identify himself as "mentally ill."**